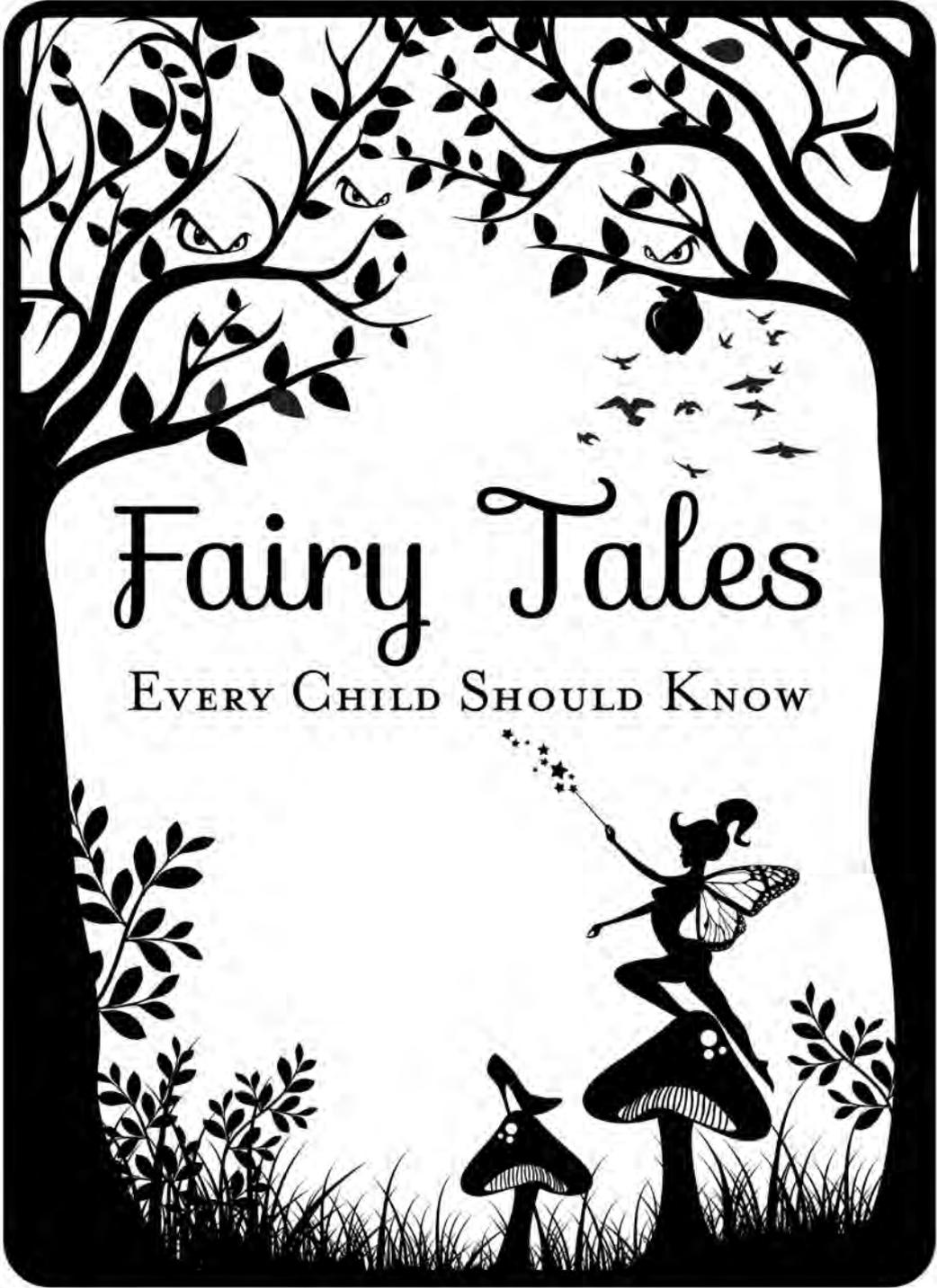


# Fairy Tales

EVERY CHILD SHOULD KNOW



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# Introduction

*The fairy tale is a poetic recording of the facts of life, an interpretation by the imagination of its hard conditions, an effort to reconcile the spirit which loves freedom and goodness and beauty with its harsh, bare and disappointing conditions. It is, in its earliest form, a spontaneous and instinctive endeavor to shape the facts of the world to meet the needs of the imagination, the cravings of the heart. It involves a free, poetic dealing with realities in accordance with the law of mental growth; it is the naïve activity of the young imagination of the race, untrammelled by the necessity of rigid adherence to the fact.*

The myths record the earliest attempt at an explanation of the world and its life; the fairy tale records the free and joyful play of the imagination, opening doors through hard conditions to the spirit, which craves power, freedom, happiness; righting wrongs and redressing injuries; defeating base designs; rewarding patience and virtue; crowning true love with happiness; placing the powers of darkness under control of man and making their ministers his servants. In the fairy story, men are not set entirely free from their

limitations, but, by the aid of fairies, genii, giants and demons, they are put in command of unusual powers and make themselves masters of the forces of nature.

The oldest fairy stories constitute a fascinating introduction to the book of modern science, curiously predicting its discoveries, its uncovering of the resources of the earth and air, its growing control of the tremendous forces which work in earth and air. And it is significant that the recent progress of science is steadily toward what our ancestors would have considered fairy land; for in all the imaginings of the childhood of the race there was nothing more marvellous or more audaciously improbable than the transmission of the accents and modulations of familiar voices through long distances, and the power of communication across leagues of sea without mechanical connections of any kind.

The faculty which created the fairy tale is the same faculty which, supplemented by a broader observation and based on more accurate knowledge, has broadened the range and activities of modern man, made the world accessible to him, enabled him to live in one place but to speak and act in places thousands of miles distant, given him command of colossal forces, and is fast making him rich on a scale which would have seemed incredible to men of a half-century ago. There is nothing in any fairy tale more marvellous and inherently improbable than many of the achievements of scientific observation and invention, and we are only at the beginning of the wonders that lie within the reach of the human spirit!

No one can understand the modern world without the aid of the imagination, and as the frontiers of knowledge are pushed still

further away from the obvious and familiar, there will be an increasing tax on the imagination. The world of dead matter which our fathers thought they understood has become a world of subtle forces moving with inconceivable velocity; nothing is inert, all things are transformed into other and more elusive shapes precisely as the makers of the fairy tales foresaw and predicted; the world lives in every atom just as their world lived; forces lie just outside the range of physical sight, but entirely within the range of spiritual vision, precisely as the tellers of these old stories divined; mystery and wonder enfold all things, and not only evoke the full play of the mind, but flood it with intimations and suggestions of the presence of more elusive and subtle forces, of finer and more obedient powers, as the world of fairies, magi and demons enfolded the ancient earth of daily toil and danger.

In a word, the fairy stories have come true; they are historical in the sense that they faithfully report a stage of spiritual growth and predict a higher order of realities through a deeper knowledge of actualities. They were poetic renderings of facts which science is fast verifying, chiefly by the use of the same faculty which enriched early literature with the myth and the fairy tale. The scientist has turned poet in these later days, and the imagination which once expressed itself in a free handling of facts so as to make them answer the needs and demands of the human spirit, now expresses itself in that breadth of vision which reconstructs an extinct animal from a bone and analyzes the light of a sun flaming on the outermost boundaries of space.

This collection of tales, gathered from the rich literature of the

childhood of the world, or from the books of the few modern men who have found the key of that wonderful world, is put forth not only without apology, but with the hope that it may widen the demand for these charming reports of a world in which the truths of our working world are loyally upheld, while its hard facts are quietly but authoritatively dismissed from attention. The widest interpretation has been given to the fairy tale, so as to include many of those classic romances of childhood in which no fairy appears, but which are invested with the air and are permeated with the glorious freedom of fairy land.

No sane man or woman undervalues the immense gains of the modern world in the knowledge of facts and the application of ideas to things in order to secure comfort, health, access to the treasure in the earth and on its surface, the means of education and greater freedom from the tyranny of toil by the accumulation of the fruits of toil; but no sane man or woman believes that a mechanical age is other than a transitional age, that the possession of things is the final achievement of society, and that in multiplication of conveniences civilization will reach its point of culmination.

We are so engrossed in getting rich that we forget that by and by, when we have become rich, we shall have to learn how to live; for work can never be an end in itself; it is a "means of grace" when it is not drudgery; and it must, in the long run, be a preparation for play. For play is not organized idleness, frivolity set in a fanciful order; it is the normal, spontaneous exercise of physical activity, the wholesome gayety of the mind, the natural expression of the spirit, without self-consciousness, constraint, or the tyranny of hours and

tasks. It is the highest form of energy, because it is free and creative; a joy in itself, and therefore a joy in the world. This is the explanation of the sense of freedom and elation which come from a great work of art; it is the instinctive perception of the fact that while immense toil lies behind the artist's skill, the soul of the creation came from beyond the world of work and the making of it was a bit of play. The man of creative spirit is often a tireless worker, but in his happiest hours he is at play; for all work, when it rises into freedom and power, is play. "We work," wrote a Greek thinker of the most creative people who have yet appeared, "in order that we may have leisure." The note of that life was freedom; its activity was not "evoked by external needs, but was free, spontaneous and delightful; an ordered energy which stimulates all the vital and mental powers."

Robert Louis Stevenson, who knew well how to touch work with the spirit and charm of play, reports of certain evenings spent at a clubhouse near Brussels, that the men who gathered there "were employed over the frivolous mercantile concerns of Belgium during the day; but in the evening they found some hours for the serious concerns of life." They gave their days to commerce, but their evenings were devoted to more important interests!

These words are written for those older people who have made the mistake of straying away from childhood; children do not read introductions, because they know that the valuable part of the book is to be found in the later pages. They read the stories; their elders read the introduction as well. They both need the stuff of imagination, of which myths, legends, and fairy tales are made. So

much may be said of these old stories that it is a serious question where to begin, and a still more difficult question where to end. For these tales are the first outpourings of that spring of imagination whence flow the most illuminating, inspiring, refreshing and captivating thoughts and ideas about life. No philosophy is deeper than that which underlies these stories; no psychology is more important than that which finds its choicest illustration in them; no chapter in the history of thought is more suggestive and engrossing than that which records their growth and divines their meaning. Fairy tales and myths are so much akin that they are easily transformed and exchange costumes without changing character; while the legend, which belongs to a later period, often reflects the large meaning of the myth and the free fancy of the fairy tale.

As a class, children not only possess the faculty of imagination, but are very largely occupied with it during the most sensitive and formative years, and those who lack it are brought under its spell by their fellows. They do not accurately distinguish between the actual and the imaginary, and they live at ease in a world out of which paths run in every direction into wonderland. They begin their education when they begin to play; for play not only affords an outlet for their energy, and so supplies one great means of growth and training, but places them in social relations with their mates and in conscious contact with the world about them. The old games that have been played by generations of children not only precede the training of the school and supplement it, but accomplish some results in the nature of the child which are beyond the reach of the school. When a crowd of boys are rushing across country in

“hounds and deer,” they are giving lungs, heart and muscles the best possible exercise; they are sharing certain rules of honor with one another, expressed in that significant phrase, “fair play”; and they are giving rein to their imaginations in the very name of their occupation. Body, spirit and imagination have their part in every good game; for the interest of a game lies in its appeal to the imagination, as in “hounds and deer,” or in its stimulus to activity, as in “tag” and “hide-and-seek.”

There are few chapters in the biography of the childhood of men of genius more significant than those which describe imaginary worlds which were, for a time, as real as the actual world in which the boy lived. Goethe entertained and mystified his playmates with accounts of a certain garden in which he wandered at will, but which they could not find; and De Quincey created a kingdom, with all its complex relations and varied activities, which he ruled with beneficence and affection until, in an unlucky hour, he revealed his secret to his brother, who straightway usurped his authority, and governed his subjects with such tyranny and cruelty that De Quincey was compelled to save his people by destroying them.

These elaborate and highly organized efforts of the young imagination, of which boys and girls of unusual inventiveness are capable, are imitated on a smaller scale by all normal children. They endow inanimate things with life, and play and suffer with them as with their real playmates. The little girl not only talks with her dolls, but weeps with and for them when disaster overtakes them. The boy faces foes of his own making in the woods, or at

lonely places in the road, who are quite as real to him as the people with whom he lives. By common agreement a locality often becomes a historic spot to a whole group of boys; enemies are met and overcome there; grave perils are bravely faced; and the magic sometimes lingers long after the dream has been dissolved in the dawning light of definite knowledge, Childhood is one long day of discovery; first, to the unfolding spirit, there is revealed a wonderland partly actual and partly created by the action of the mind; then follows the slow awakening, when the growing boy or girl learns to distinguish between tact and fancy, and to separate the real from the imaginary.

This process of learning to "see things as they are" is often regarded as the substance of education, and to be able to distinguish sharply and accurately between reality and vision, actual and imaginary image is accepted as the test of thorough training of the intelligence. What really takes place is the readjustment of the work of the faculties so as to secure harmonious action; and in the happy and sound development of the nature the imagination does not give place to observation, but deals with principles, forces and laws instead of with things. The loss of vision is never compensated for by the gain of sight; to see a thing one must use his mind quite as much as his eye. It too often happens, as the result of our educational methods, that in training the observer we blight the poet; and the poet is, after all, the most important person in society. He keeps the soul of his fellows alive. Without him the modern world would become one vast, dreary, soul-destroying Coketown, and man would sink to the level of Gradgrind. The practical man de-

velops the resources of the country, the man of vision discerns, formulates and directs its spiritual policy and growth; the mechanic builds the house, but the architect creates it; the artisan makes the tools, but the artist uses them; the observer sees and records the fact, but the scientist discovers the law; the man of affairs manages the practical concerns of the world from day to day, but the poet makes it spiritual, significant, interesting, worth living in.

The modern child passes through the same stages as did the children of four thousand years ago. He, too, is a poet. He believes that the world about him throbs with life and is peopled with all manner of strange, beautiful, powerful folk, who live just outside the range of his sight; he, too, personifies light and heat and storm and wind and cold as his remote ancestors did. He, too, lives in and through his imagination; and if, in later life, he grows in power and becomes a creative man, his achievements are the fruits of the free and vigorous life of his imagination. The higher kinds of power, the higher opportunities of mind, the richer resources, the springs of the deeper happiness, are open to him in the exact degree in which he is able to use his imagination with individual freedom and intelligence. Formal education makes small provision for this great need of his nature; it trains his eye, his hand, his faculty of observation, his ability to reason, his capacity for resolute action; but it takes little account of that higher faculty which, cooperating with the other faculties, makes him an architect instead of a builder, an artist instead of an artisan, a poet instead of a drudge.

The fairy tale belongs to the child and ought always to be within his reach, not only because it is his special literary form and

his nature craves it, but because it is one of the most vital of the textbooks offered to him in the school of life. In ultimate importance it outranks the arithmetic, the grammar, the geography, the manuals of science; for without the aid of the imagination none of these books is really comprehensible.

HAMILTON WRIGHT MABIE

## Chapter I

### ONE EYE, TWO EYES, THREE EYES

There was once a woman who had three daughters, of whom the eldest was named "One Eye," because she had only one eye in the middle of her forehead. The second had two eyes, like other people, and she was called "Two Eyes." The youngest had three eyes, two like her second sister, and one in the middle of her forehead, like the eldest, and she bore the name of "Three Eyes."

Now because little Two Eyes looked just like other people, her mother and sisters could not endure her. They said to her, "You are not better than common folks, with your two eyes; you don't belong to us."

So they pushed her about, and threw all their old clothes to her for her to wear, and gave her only the pieces that were left to eat, and did everything that they could to make her miserable. It so happened that little Two Eyes was sent into the fields to take care of the goats, and she was often very hungry, although her sisters had as much as they liked to eat. So one day she seated herself on a mound in the field, and began to weep and cry so bitterly that two

little rivulets flowed from her eyes. Once, in the midst of her sorrow she looked up, and saw a woman standing near her who said, "What are you weeping for, little Two Eyes?"

"I cannot help weeping," she replied; "for because I have two eyes, like other people, my mother and sisters cannot bear me; they push me about from one corner to another and make me wear their old clothes, and give me nothing to eat but what is left, so that I am always hungry. To-day they gave me so little that I am nearly starved."

"Dry up your tears, little Two Eyes," said the wise woman; "I will tell you something to do which will prevent you from ever being hungry again. You have only to say to your own goat:

*"Little goat, if you're able,  
Pray deck out my table,"*

"and immediately there will be a pretty little table before you full of all sorts of good things for you to eat, as much as you like. And when you have had enough, and you do not want the table any more, you need only say:

*"Little goat, when you're able,  
Remove my nice table,  
and it will vanish from your eyes."*

Then the wise woman went away. "Now," thought little Two Eyes, "I will try if what she says is true, for I am very hungry," so she said:

*"Little goat, if you're able,  
Pray deck out my table."*

The words were scarcely spoken, when a beautiful little table stood really before her; it had a white cloth and plates, and knives and forks, and silver spoons, and such a delicious dinner, smoking hot as if it had just come from the kitchen. Then little Two Eyes sat down and said the shortest grace she knew—"Pray God be our guest for all time. Amen"—before she allowed herself to taste anything. But oh, how she did enjoy her dinner! and when she had finished, she said, as the wise woman had taught her:

*"Little goat, when you're able,  
Remove my nice table."*

In a moment, the table and everything upon it had disappeared. "That is a pleasant way to keep house," said little Two Eyes, and felt quite contented and happy. In the evening, when she went home with the goat, she found an earthenware dish with some scraps which her sisters had left for her, but she did not touch them. The next morning she went away with the goat, leaving them behind where they had been placed for her. The first and second times that she did so, the sisters did not notice it; but when they found it happened every day, they said one to the other, "There is something strange about little Two Eyes, she leaves her supper every day, and all that has been put for her has been wasted; she must get food somewhere else."

So they determined to find out the truth, and they arranged that when Two Eyes took her goat to the field, One Eye should go with her to take particular notice of what she did, and discover if anything was brought for her to eat and drink.

So when Two Eyes started with her goat, One Eye said to her, "I am going with you to-day to see if the goat gets her food properly while you are watching the rest."

But Two Eyes knew what she had in her mind. So she drove the goat into the long grass, and said, "Come, One Eye, let us sit down here and rest, and I will sing to you."

One Eye seated herself, and, not being accustomed to walk so far, or to be out in the heat of the sun, she began to feel tired, and as little Two Eyes kept on singing, she closed her one eye and fell fast asleep.

When Two Eyes saw this, she knew that One Eye could not betray her, so she said:

*"Little goat, if you are able,  
Come and deck my pretty table."*

She seated herself when it appeared, and ate and drank very quickly, and when she had finished she said:

*"Little goat, when you are able,  
Come and clear away my table."*

It vanished in the twinkling of an eye; and then Two Eyes woke up One Eye, and said, "Little One Eye, you are a clever one to

watch goats; for, while you are asleep, they might be running all over the world. Come, let us go home!"

So they went to the house, and little Two Eyes again left the scraps on the dish untouched, and One Eye could not tell her mother whether little Two Eyes had eaten anything in the field; for she said to excuse herself, "I was asleep."

The next day the mother said to Three Eyes, "You must go to the field this time, and find out whether there is anyone who brings food to little Two Eyes; for she must eat and drink secretly."

So when little Two Eyes started with her goat, Three Eyes followed, and said, "I am going with you to-day, to see if the goats are properly fed and watched."

But Two Eyes knew her thoughts; so she led the goat through the long grass to tire Three Eyes, and at last she said, "Let us sit down here and rest, and I will sing to you, Three Eyes."

She was glad to sit down, for the walk and the heat of the sun had really tired her; and, as her sister continued her song, she was obliged to close two of her eyes, and they slept, but not the third. In fact, Three Eyes was wide awake with one eye, and heard and saw all that Two Eyes did; for poor little Two Eyes, thinking she was asleep, said her speech to the goat, and the table came with all the good things on it, and was carried away when Two Eyes had eaten enough; and the cunning Three Eyes saw it all with her one eye. But she pretended to be asleep when her sister came to wake her and told her she was going home.

That evening, when little Two Eyes again left the supper they placed aside for her, Three Eyes said to her mother, "I know where

the proud thing gets her good eating and drinking;" and then she described all she had seen in the field. "I saw it all with one eye," she said; "for she had made my other two eyes close with her fine singing, but luckily the one in my forehead remained open."

Then the envious mother cried out to poor little Two Eyes, "You wish to have better food than we, do you? You shall lose your wish!" She took up a butcher's knife, went out, and stuck the good little goat in the heart, and it fell dead.

When little Two Eyes saw this, she went out into the field, seated herself on a mound, and wept most bitter tears.

Presently the wise woman stood again before her, and said, "Little Two Eyes, why do you weep?"

"Ah!" she replied, "I must weep. The goat, who every day spread my table so beautifully, has been killed by my mother, and I shall have again to suffer from hunger and sorrow."

"Little Two Eyes," said the wise woman, "I will give you some good advice. Go home, and ask your sister to give you the inside of the slaughtered goat, and then go and bury it in the ground in front of the house-door."

On saying this the wise woman vanished.

Little Two Eyes went home quickly, and said to her sister, "Dear sister, give me some part of my poor goat. I don't want anything valuable; only give me the inside."

Her sister laughed, and said, "Of course you can have that, if you don't want anything else."

So little Two Eyes took the inside; and in the evening, when all was quiet, buried it in the ground outside the house-door, as the wise woman had told her to do.

The next morning, when they all rose and looked out of the window, there stood a most wonderful tree, with leaves of silver and apples of gold hanging between them. Nothing in the wide world could be more beautiful or more costly. They none of them knew how the tree could come there in one night, excepting little Two Eyes. She supposed it had grown up from the inside of the goat; for it stood over where she had buried it in the earth.

Then said the mother to little One Eye, "Climb up, my child, and break off some of the fruit from the tree."

One Eye climbed up, but when she tried to catch a branch and pluck one of the apples, it escaped from her hand, and so it happened every time she made the attempt, and, do what she would, she could not reach one.

"Three Eyes," said the mother, "climb up, and try what you can do; perhaps you will be able to see better with your three eyes than One Eye can."

One Eye slid down from the tree, and Three Eyes climbed up. But Three Eyes was not more skilful; with all her efforts she could not draw the branches, nor the fruit, near enough to pluck even a leaf, for they sprang back as she put out her hand.

At last the mother was impatient, and climbed up herself, but with no more success, for, as she appeared to grasp a branch, or fruit, her hand closed upon thin air.

"May I try?" said little Two Eyes; "perhaps I may succeed."

"You, indeed!" cried her sisters; "you, with your two eyes, what can you do?"

But Two Eyes climbed up, and the golden apples did not fly

back from her when she touched them, but almost laid themselves on her hand, and she plucked them one after another, till she carried down her own little apron full.

The mother took them from her, and gave them to her sisters, as she said little Two Eyes did not handle them properly; but this was only from jealousy, because little Two Eyes was the only one who could reach the fruit, and she went into the house feeling more spiteful to her than ever.

It happened that while all three sisters were standing under the tree together a young knight rode by. "Run away, quick, and hide yourself, little Two Eyes; hide yourself somewhere, for we shall be quite ashamed for you to be seen." Then they pushed the poor girl, in great haste, under an empty cask, which stood near the tree, and several of the golden apples that she had plucked along with her.

As the knight came nearer they saw he was a handsome man; and presently he halted, and looked with wonder and pleasure at the beautiful tree with its silver leaves and golden fruit.

At last he spoke to the sisters, and asked: "To whom does this beautiful tree belong? If a man possessed only one branch he might obtain all he wished for in the world."

"This tree belongs to us," said the two sisters, "and we will break off a branch for you if you like." They gave themselves a great deal of trouble in trying to do as they offered; but all to no purpose, for the branches and the fruit evaded their efforts, and sprung back at every touch.

"This is wonderful," exclaimed the knight, "that the tree should belong to you, and yet you are not able to gather even a branch."

They persisted, however, in declaring that the tree was their own property. At this moment little Two Eyes, who was angry because her sisters had not told the truth, caused two of the golden apples to slip out from under the cask, and they rolled on till they reached the feet of the knight's horse. When he saw them, he asked in astonishment where they came from.

The two ugly maidens replied that they had another sister, but they dared not let him see her, for she had only two eyes, like common people, and was named little Two Eyes.

But the knight felt very anxious to see her, and called out, "Little Two Eyes, come here." Then came Two Eyes, quite comforted, from the empty cask, and the knight was astonished to find her so beautiful.

Then he said, "Little Two Eyes, can you break off a branch of the tree for me?"

"Oh yes," she replied, "I can, very easily, for the tree belongs to me." And she climbed up, and, without any trouble, broke off a branch with its silver leaves and golden fruit and gave it to the knight.

He looked down at her as she stood by his horse, and said: "Little Two Eyes, what shall I give you for this?"

"Ah!" she answered, "I suffer from hunger and thirst, and sorrow, and trouble, from early morning till late at night; if you would only take me with you, and release me, I should be so happy."

Then the knight lifted the little maiden on his horse, and rode home with her to his father's castle. There she was given beautiful clothes to wear, and as much to eat and drink as she wished, and

as she grew up the young knight loved her so dearly that they were married with great rejoicings.

Now, when the two sisters saw little Two Eyes carried away by the handsome young knight, they were overjoyed at their good fortune. "The wonderful tree belongs to us now," they said; "even if we cannot break off a branch, yet everybody who passes will stop to admire it, and make acquaintance with us, and, who knows? we may get husbands after all."

But when they rose the next morning, lo! the tree had vanished, and with it all their hopes. And on this very morning, when little Two Eyes looked out of her chamber window of the castle, she saw, to her great joy, that the tree had followed her.

Little Two Eyes lived for a long time in great happiness; but she heard nothing of her sisters, till one day two poor women came to the castle, to beg for alms. Little Two Eyes saw them, and, looking earnestly in their faces, she recognised her two sisters, who had become so poor that they were obliged to beg their bread from door to door.

But the good sister received them most kindly, and promised to take care of them and give them all they wanted. And then they did indeed repent and feel sorry for having treated her so badly in their youthful days.

## Chapter 2

### THE MAGIC MIRROR

*One day in the middle of winter*, when the snowflakes fell from the sky like feathers, a queen sat at a window netting. Her netting-needle was of black ebony, and as she worked, and the snow glittered, she pricked her finger, and three drops of blood fell into the snow. The red spots looked so beautiful in the white snow that the queen thought to herself: "Oh, if I only had a little child, I should like it to be as fair as snow, as rosy as the red blood, and with hair and eyes as black as ebony."

Very soon after this the queen had a little daughter who was very fair, had rosy cheeks, and hair as black as ebony; and they gave her the name of Snow-white. But at the birth of the little child the queen died.

When Snow-white was a year old, the king took another wife. She was very handsome, but so proud and vain that she could not endure that anyone should surpass her in beauty. She possessed a wonderful mirror, and when she stood before it to look at herself she would say:

*"Mirror, mirror on the wall,  
Am I most beautiful of all?"*

Then the mirror would reply:

*"Young queen, thou art so wondrous fair,  
None can with thee at all compare."*

Then she would go away quite contented, for she knew the magic mirror could speak only the truth.

Years went by, and as Snow-white grew up, she became day after day more beautiful, till she reached the age of seven years, and then people began to talk about her, and say that she would be more lovely even than the queen herself. So the proud woman went to her magic looking-glass, and asked:

*"Mirror, mirror on the wall,  
Am I most beautiful of all?"*

But the mirror answered:

*"Queen, thou art lovely still to see,  
But Snow-white will be  
A thousand times more beautiful than thee."*

Then the queen was terrified, and turned green and yellow with jealousy. If she had caught sight of Snow-white at that moment, she

would have been ready to tear her heart out of her body, she hated the maiden so fiercely.

And this jealousy and envy grew every day stronger and stronger in her heart, like a disease, till she had no rest day or night.

At last she sent for a hunter, who lived near a forest, and said to him, "Hunter, I want to get rid of that child. Take her out into the wood, and if you bring me some proofs that she is dead, I will reward you handsomely. Never let her appear before my eyes again."

So the hunter enticed the child into the wood; but when he took out his hunting-knife to thrust into Snow-white's innocent heart, she fell on her knees and wept, and said, "Ah, dear hunter, leave me my life; I will run away into the wild wood, and never, never come home any more."

She looked so innocent and beautiful as she knelt, that the hunter's heart was moved with compassion: "Run away, then, thou poor child," he cried; "I cannot harm thee."

Snow-white thanked him so sweetly, and was out of sight in a few moments.

"She will be devoured by wild beasts," he said to himself. But the thought that he had not killed her was as if a stone-weight had been lifted from his heart.

To satisfy the queen, he took part of the inside of a young fawn, which the wicked woman thought was poor little Snow-white, and was overjoyed to think she was dead.

But the poor little motherless child, when she found herself alone in the wood, and saw nothing but trees and leaves, was dreadfully frightened, and knew not what to do. At last she began

to run over the sharp stones and through the thorns, and though the wild beasts sprang out before her, they did her no harm. She ran on as long as she could till her little feet became quite sore; and towards evening she saw, to her great joy, a pretty little house. So she went up to it, and found the door open and no one at home.

It was a tiny little house, but everything in it was so clean and neat and elegant that it is beyond description. In the middle of the room stood a small table, covered with a snow-white table-cloth, ready for supper. On it were arranged seven little plates, seven little spoons, seven little knives and forks, and seven mugs. By the wall stood seven little beds, near each other, covered with white quilts.

Poor Snow-white, who was hungry and thirsty, ate a few vegetables and a little bread from each plate, and drank a little drop of wine from each cup, for she did not like to take all she wanted from one alone. After this, feeling very tired, she thought she would lie down and rest on one of the beds, but she found it difficult to choose one to suit her. One was too long, another too short; so she tried them all till she came to the seventh, and that was so comfortable that she laid herself down, and was soon fast asleep.

When it was quite dark the masters of the house came home. They were seven little dwarfs, who dug and searched in the mountains for minerals. First they lighted seven little lamps, and as soon as the room was full of light they saw that some one had been there, for everything did not stand in the order in which they had left it.

Then said the first, "Who has been sitting in my little chair?"

The second exclaimed, "Who has been eating from my little plate?"

The third cried, "Some one has taken part of my bread."

"Who has been eating my vegetables?" said the fourth.

Then said the fifth, "Some one has used my fork."

The sixth cried, "And who has been cutting with my knife?"

"And some one has been drinking out of my cup," said the seventh.

Then the eldest looked at his bed, and, seeing that it looked tumbled, cried out that some one had been upon it. The others came running forward, and found all their beds in the same condition. But when the seventh approached his bed, and saw Snow-white lying there fast asleep, he called the others, who came quickly, and holding their lights over their heads, cried out in wonder as they beheld the sleeping child. "Oh, what a beautiful little child!" they said to each other, and were so delighted that they would not awaken her, but left her to sleep as long as she liked in the little bed, while its owner slept with one of his companions, and so the night passed away.

In the morning, when Snow-white awoke, and saw all the dwarfs, she was terribly frightened. But they spoke kindly to her, till she lost all fear, and they asked her name.

"I am called Snow-white," she replied.

"But how came you to our house?" asked one.

Then she related to them all that had happened; how her step-mother had sent her into the wood with the hunter, who had spared her life, and that, after wandering about for a whole day, she had found their house.

The dwarfs talked a little while together, and then one said,

“Do you think you could be our little housekeeper, to make the beds, cook the dinner, and wash and sew and knit for us, and keep everything neat and clean and orderly? If you can, then you shall stay here with us, and nobody shall hurt you.”

“Oh yes, I will try,” said Snow-white. So they let her stay, and she was a clever little thing. She managed very well, and kept the house quite clean and in order. And while they were gone to the mountains to find gold, she got their supper ready, and they were very happy together.

But every morning when they left her, the kind little dwarfs warned Snow-white to be careful. While the maiden was alone they knew she was in danger, and told her not to show herself, for her stepmother would soon find out where she was, and said, “Whatever you do, let nobody into the house while we are gone.”

After the wicked queen had proved, as she thought, that Snow-white was dead, she felt quite satisfied there was no one in the world now likely to become so beautiful as herself, so she stepped up to her mirror and asked:

*“Mirror, mirror on the wall,  
Who is most beautiful of all?”*

To her vexation the mirror replied:

*“Fair queen, at home there is none like thee,  
But over the mountains is Snow-white free,*

*With seven little dwarfs, who are strange to see;  
A thousand times fairer than thou is she.”*

The queen was furious when she heard this, for she knew the mirror was truthful, and that the hunter must have deceived her, and that Snow-white still lived. So she sat and pondered over these facts, thinking what would be best to do, for as long as she was not the most beautiful woman in the land, her jealousy gave her no peace. After a time, she decided what to do. First, she painted her face, and whitened her hair; then she dressed herself in old woman's clothes, and was so disguised that no one could have recognised her.

Watching an opportunity, she left the castle, and took her way to the wood near the mountains, where the seven little dwarfs lived. When she reached the door, she knocked, and cried, “Beautiful goods to sell; beautiful goods to sell.”

Snow-white, when she heard it, peeped through the window, and said, “Good-day, old lady. What have you in your basket for me to buy?”

“Everything that is pretty,” she replied; “laces, and pearls, and earrings, and bracelets of every colour;” and she held up her basket, which was lined with glittering silk.

“I can let in this respectable old woman,” thought Snow-white; “she will not harm me.” So she unbolted the door, and told her to come in. Oh, how delighted Snow-white was with the pretty things; she bought several trinkets, and a beautiful silk lace for her stays, but she did not see the evil eye of the old woman who was watch-

ing her. Presently she said, "Child, come here; I will show you how to lace your stays properly." Snow-white had no suspicion, so she placed herself before the old woman that she might lace her stays. But no sooner was the lace in the holes than she began to lace so fast and pull so tight that Snow-white could not breathe, and presently fell down at her feet as if dead.

"Now you are beautiful indeed," said the woman, and, fancying she heard footsteps, she rushed away as quickly as she could.

Not long after, the seven dwarfs came home, and they were terribly frightened to see dear little Snow-white lying on the ground without motion, as if she were dead. They lifted her up, and saw in a moment that her stays had been laced too tight. Quickly they cut the stay-lace in two, till Snow-white began to breathe a little, and after a time was restored to life. But when the dwarfs heard what had happened, they said: "That old market-woman was no other than your wicked stepmother. Snow-white, you must never again let anyone in while we are not with you."

The wicked queen when she returned home, after, as she thought, killing Snow-white, went to her looking-glass and asked:

*"Mirror, mirror on the wall,  
Am I most beautiful of all?"*

Then answered the mirror:

*"Queen, thou art not the fairest now;  
Snow-white over the mountain's brow  
A thousand times fairer is than thou."*

When she heard this she was so terrified that the blood rushed to her heart, for she knew that after all she had done Snow-white was still alive. "I must think of something else," she said to herself, "to get rid of that odious child."

Now this wicked queen had some knowledge of witchcraft, and she knew how to poison a comb, so that whoever used it would fall dead. This the wicked stepmother soon got ready, and dressing herself again like an old woman, but quite different from the last, she started off to travel over the mountains to the dwarfs' cottage.

When Snow-white heard the old cry, "Goods to sell, fine goods to sell," she looked out of the window and said:

"Go away, go away; I must not let you in."

"Look at this, then," said the woman; "you shall have it for your own if you like," and she held up before the child's eyes the bright tortoise-shell comb which she had poisoned.

Poor Snow-white could not refuse such a present, so she opened the door and let the woman in, quite forgetting the advice of the dwarfs. After she had bought a few things, the old woman said, "Let me try this comb in your hair; it is so fine it will make it beautifully smooth and glossy."

So Snow-white, thinking no wrong, stood before the woman to have her hair dressed; but no sooner had the comb touched the roots of her hair than the poison took effect, and the maiden fell to the ground lifeless.

"You paragon of beauty," said the wicked woman, "all has just happened as I expected," and then she went away quickly.

Fortunately evening soon arrived, and the seven dwarfs re-

turned home. When they saw Snow-white lying dead on the ground, they knew at once that the stepmother had been there again; but on seeing the poisoned comb in her hair they pulled it out quickly, and Snow-white very soon came to herself, and related all that had passed.

Again they warned her not to let anyone enter the house during their absence, and on no account to open the door; but Snow-white was not clever enough to resist her clever wicked stepmother, and she forgot to obey.

The wicked queen felt sure now that she had really killed Snow-white; so as soon as she returned home she went to her looking-glass, and inquired:

*"Mirror, mirror on the wall,  
Who is most beautiful of all?"*

But the mirror replied:

*"Queen, thou art the fairest here,  
But not when Snow-white is near;  
Over the mountains still is she,  
Fairer a thousand times than thee."*

As the looking-glass thus replied, the queen trembled and quaked with rage. "Snow-white shall die," cried she, "if it costs me my own life!"

Then she went into a lonely forbidden chamber where no one

was allowed to come, and poisoned a beautiful apple. Outwardly it looked ripe and tempting, of a pale green with rosy cheeks, so that it made everyone's mouth water to look at it, but whoever ate even a small piece must die.

As soon as this apple was ready, the wicked queen painted her face, disguised her hair, dressed herself as a farmer's wife, and went again over the mountains to the dwarfs' cottage.

When she knocked at the door, Snow-white stretched her head out of the window, and said, "I dare not let you in; the seven dwarfs have forbidden me."

"But I am all right," said the farmer's wife. "Stay, I will show you my apples. Are they not beautiful? let me make you a present of one."

"No, thank you," cried Snow-white; "I dare not take it."

"What!" cried the woman, "are you afraid it is poisoned? Look here now, I will cut the apple in halves; you shall have the rosy-cheek side, and I will eat the other."

The apple was so cleverly made that the red side alone was poisonous. Snow-white longed so much for the beautiful fruit as she saw the farmer's wife eat one half that she could not any longer resist, but stretched out her hand from the window and took the poisoned half. But no sooner had she taken one mouthful than she fell on the ground dead.

Then the wicked queen glanced in at the window with a horrible look in her eye, and laughed aloud as she exclaimed:

"White as snow, red as blood, and black as ebony; this time the dwarfs will not be able to awake thee."

And as soon as she arrived at home, and asked her mirror who was the most beautiful in the land, it replied:

*“Fair queen, there is none in all the land  
So beautiful as thou.”*

Then had her envious heart rest, at least such rest as a heart full of envy and malice ever can have.

The little dwarfs, when they came home in the evening, found poor Snow-white on the ground; but though they lifted her up, there were no signs of breath from her mouth, and they found she was really dead. Yet they tried in every way to restore her; they tried to extract the poison from her lips, they combed her hair, and washed it with wine and water, but all to no purpose: the dear child gave no signs of life, and at last they knew she was dead. Then they laid her on a bier, and the seven dwarfs seated themselves round her, and wept and mourned for three days. They would have buried her then, but there was no change in her appearance; her face was as fresh, and her cheeks and lips had their usual colour. Then said one, “We cannot lay this beautiful child in the dark, cold earth.”

So they agreed to have a coffin made entirely of glass, transparent all over, that they might watch for any signs of decay, and they wrote in letters of gold her name on the lid, and that she was the daughter of a king. The coffin was placed on the side of the mountain, and each of them watched it by turns, so that it was never left alone. And the birds of the air came near and mourned for Snow-white; first the owl, then the raven, and at last the dove.

Snow-white lay for a long, long time in the glass coffin, but showed not the least signs of decay. It seemed as if she slept; for her skin was snow white, her cheeks rosy red, and her hair black as ebony.

It happened one day that the son of a king, while riding in the forest, came by chance upon the dwarfs’ house and asked for a night’s lodging. As he left the next morning he saw the coffin on the mountain-side, with beautiful Snow-white lying in it, and read what was written upon the lid in letters of gold.

Then he said to the dwarfs, “Let me have this coffin, and I will give you for it whatever you ask.”

But the elder dwarf answered, “We would not give it thee for all the gold in the world.”

But the prince answered, “Let me have it as a gift, then. I know not why, but my heart is drawn towards this beautiful child, and I feel I cannot live without her. If you will let me have her, she shall be treated with the greatest honour and respect as one dearly beloved.”

As he thus spoke the good little dwarfs were full of sympathy for him, and gave him the coffin. Then the prince called his servants, and the coffin was placed on their shoulders, and they carried it away, followed by the king’s son, who watched it carefully. Now it happened that one of them made a false step and stumbled. This shook the coffin, and caused the poisoned piece of apple which Snow-white had bitten to roll out of her mouth. A little while after she suddenly opened her eyes, lifted up the coffin-lid, raised herself and was again alive.

“Oh! where am I?” she cried.

Full of joy, the king's son approached her, and said, "Dear Snow-white, you are safe; you are with me."

Then he related to her all that had happened, and what the little dwarfs had told him about her, and said at last, "I love you better than all in the world besides, dear little Snow-white, and you must come with me to my father's castle and be my wife."

Then was Snow-white taken out of the coffin and placed in a carriage to travel with the prince, and the king was so pleased with his son's choice that the marriage was soon after celebrated with great pomp and magnificence.

Now it happened that the stepmother of Snow-white was invited, among other guests, to the wedding-feast. Before she left her house she stood in all her rich dress before the magic mirror to admire her own appearance, but she could not help saying;

*"Mirror, mirror on the wall,  
Am I most beautiful of all?"*

Then to her surprise the mirror replied:

*"Fair queen, thou art the fairest here,  
But at the palace, now,  
The bride will prove a thousand times  
More beautiful than thou."*

Then the wicked woman uttered a curse, and was so dreadfully alarmed that she knew not what to do. At first she declared she

would not go to this wedding at all, but she felt it impossible to rest until she had seen the bride, so she determined to go. But what was her astonishment and vexation when she recognised in the young bride Snow-white herself, now grown a charming young woman, and richly dressed in royal robes! Her rage and terror were so great that she stood still and could not move for some minutes. At last she went into the ballroom, but the slippers she wore were to her as iron bands full of coals of fire, in which she was obliged to dance. And so in the red, glowing shoes she continued to dance till she fell dead on the floor, a sad example of envy and jealousy.

## Chapter 3

### THE ENCHANTED STAG

*There were once a brother and sister who loved each other dearly; their mother was dead, and their father had married again a woman who was most unkind and cruel to them. One day the boy took his sister's hand, and said to her, "Dear little sister, since our mother died we have not had one happy hour. Our stepmother gives us dry hard crusts for dinner and supper; she often knocks us about, and threatens to kick us out of the house. Even the little dogs under the table fare better than we do, for she often throws them nice pieces to eat. Heaven pity us! Oh, if our dear mother knew! Come, let us go out into the wide world!"*

So they went out, and wandered over fields and meadows the whole day till evening. At last they found themselves in a large forest; it began to rain, and the little sister said, "See, brother, heaven and our hearts weep together." At last, tired out with hunger and sorrow, and the long journey, they crept into a hollow tree, laid themselves down, and slept till morning.

When they awoke the sun was high in the heavens, and shone brightly into the hollow tree, so they left their place of shelter and wandered away in search of water.

“Oh, I am so thirsty!” said the boy. “If we could only find a brook or a stream.” He stopped to listen, and said, “Stay, I think I hear a running stream.” So he took his sister by the hand, and they ran together to find it.

Now, the stepmother of these poor children was a wicked witch. She had seen the children go away, and, following them cautiously like a snake, had bewitched all the springs and streams in the forest. The pleasant trickling of a brook over the pebbles was heard by the children as they reached it, and the boy was just stooping to drink, when the sister heard in the babbling of the brook:

*“Whoever drinks of me, a tiger soon will be.”*

Then she cried quickly, “Stay, brother, stay! do not drink, or you will become a wild beast, and tear me to pieces.”

Thirsty as he was, the brother conquered his desire to drink at her words, and said, “Dear sister, I will wait till we come to a spring.” So they wandered farther, but as they approached, she heard in the bubbling spring the words—

*“Who drinks of me, a wolf will be.”*

“Brother, I pray you, do not drink of this brook; you will be changed into a wolf, and devour me.”

Again the brother denied himself and promised to wait; but he

said, “At the next stream I must drink, say what you will, my thirst is so great.”

Not far off ran a pretty streamlet, looking clear and bright; but here also in its murmuring waters, the sister heard the words—

*“Who dares to drink of me,  
Turned to a stag will be.”*

“Dear brother, do not drink,” she began; but she was too late, for her brother had already knelt by the stream to drink, and as the first drop of water touched his lips he became a fawn. How the little sister wept over the enchanted brother, and the fawn wept also.

He did not run away, but stayed close to her; and at last she said, “Stand still, dear fawn; don’t fear, I must take care of you, but I will never leave you.” So she untied her little golden garter and fastened it round the neck of the fawn; then she gathered some soft green rushes, and braided them into a soft string, which she fastened to the fawn’s golden collar, and then led him away into the depths of the forest.

After wandering about for some time, they at last found a little deserted hut, and the sister was overjoyed, for she thought it would form a nice shelter for them both. So she led the fawn in, and then went out alone, to gather moss and dried leaves, to make him a soft bed.

Every morning she went out to gather dried roots, nuts, and berries, for her own food, and sweet fresh grass for the fawn, which he ate out of her hand, and the poor little animal went out with her,

and played about as happy as the day was long.

When evening came, and the poor sister felt tired, she would kneel down and say her prayers, and then lay her delicate head on the fawn's back, which was a soft warm pillow, on which she could sleep peacefully. Had this dear brother only kept his own proper form, how happy they would have been together! After they had been alone in the forest for some time, and the little sister had grown a lovely maiden, and the fawn a large stag, a numerous hunting party came to the forest, and amongst them the king of the country.

The sounding horn, the barking of the dogs, the holloa of the huntsmen, resounded through the forest, and were heard by the stag, who became eager to join his companions.

"Oh dear," he said, "do let me go and see the hunt; I cannot restrain myself." And he begged so hard that at last she reluctantly consented.

"But remember," she said, "I must lock the cottage door against those huntsmen, so when you come back in the evening, and knock, I shall not admit you, unless you say, 'Dear little sister let me in.'"

He bounded off as she spoke, scarcely stopping to listen, for it was so delightful for him to breathe the fresh air and be free again.

He had not run far when the king's chief hunter caught sight of the beautiful animal, and started off in chase of him; but it was no easy matter to overtake such rapid footsteps. Once, when he thought he had him safe, the fawn sprang over the bushes and disappeared.

As it was now nearly dark, he ran up to the little cottage, knocked at the door, and cried, "Dear little sister, let me in." The door was instantly opened, and oh, how glad his sister was to see him safely resting on his soft pleasant bed!

A few days after this, the huntsmen were again in the forest; and when the fawn heard the holloa, he could not rest in peace, but begged his sister again to let him go.

She opened the door, and said, "I will let you go this time; but pray do not forget to say what I told you, when you return this evening."

The chief hunter very soon espied the beautiful fawn with the golden collar, pointed it out to the king, and they determined to hunt it.

They chased him with all their skill till the evening; but he was too light and nimble for them to catch, till a shot wounded him slightly in the foot, so that he was obliged to hide himself in the bushes, and, after the huntsmen were gone, limp slowly home.

One of them, however, determined to follow him at a distance, and discover where he went. What was his surprise at seeing him go up to a door and knock, and to hear him say, "Dear little sister, let me in." The door was only opened a little way, and quickly shut; but the huntsman had seen enough to make him full of wonder, when he returned and described to the king what he had seen.

"We will have one more chase to-morrow," said the king, "and discover this mystery."

In the meantime the loving sister was terribly alarmed at finding the stag's foot wounded and bleeding. She quickly washed off

the blood, and, after bathing the wound, placed healing herbs on it, and said, "Lie down on your bed, dear fawn, and the wound will soon heal, if you rest your foot."

In the morning the wound was so much better that the fawn felt the foot almost as strong as ever, and so, when he again heard the holloa of the hunters, he could not rest. "Oh, dear sister, I must go once more; it will be easy for me to avoid the hunters now, and my foot feels quite well; they will not hunt me unless they see me running, and I don't mean to do that."

But his sister wept, and begged him not to go: "If they kill you, dear fawn, I shall be here alone in the forest, forsaken by the whole world."

"And I shall die of grief," he said, "if I remain here listening to the hunter's horn."

So at length his sister, with a heavy heart, set him free, and he bounded away joyfully into the forest.

As soon as the king caught sight of him, he said to the huntsmen, "Follow that stag about, but don't hurt him." So they hunted him all day, but at the approach of sunset the king said to the hunter who had followed the fawn the day before, "Come and show me the little cottage."

So they went together, and when the king saw it he sent his companion home, and went on alone so quickly that he arrived there before the fawn; and, going up to the little door, knocked and said softly, "Dear little sister, let me in."

As the door opened, the king stepped in, and in great astonishment saw a maiden more beautiful than he had ever seen in his life

standing before him. But how frightened she felt to see instead of her dear little fawn a noble gentleman walk in with a gold crown on his head.

However, he appeared very friendly, and after a little talk he held out his hand to her, and said, "Wilt thou go with me to my castle and be my dear wife?"

"Ah yes," replied the maiden, "I would willingly; but I cannot leave my dear fawn: he must go with me wherever I am."

"He shall remain with you as long as you live," replied the king, "and I will never ask you to forsake him."

While they were talking, the fawn came bounding in, looking quite well and happy. Then his sister fastened the string of rushes to his collar, took it in her hand, and led him away from the cottage in the wood to where the king's beautiful horse waited for him.

The king placed the maiden before him on his horse and rode away to his castle, the fawn following by their side. Soon after, their marriage was celebrated with great splendour, and the fawn was taken the greatest care of, and played where he pleased, or roamed about the castle grounds in happiness and safety.

In the meantime the wicked stepmother, who had caused these two young people such misery, supposed that the sister had been devoured by wild beasts, and that the fawn had been hunted to death. Therefore when she heard of their happiness, such envy and malice arose in her heart that she could find no rest till she had tried to destroy it.

She and her ugly daughter came to the castle when the queen had a little baby, and one of them pretended to be a nurse, and at

last got the mother and child into their power.

They shut the queen up in the bath, and tried to suffocate her, and the old woman put her own ugly daughter in the queen's bed that the king might not know she was away.

She would not, however, let him speak to her, but pretended that she must be kept quite quiet.

The queen escaped from the bath-room, where the wicked old woman had locked her up, but she did not go far, as she wanted to watch over her child and the little fawn.

For two nights the baby's nurse saw a figure of the queen come into the room and take up her baby and nurse it. Then she told the king, and he determined to watch himself. The old stepmother, who acted as nurse to her ugly daughter, whom she tried to make the king believe was his wife, had said that the queen was too weak to see him, and never left her room. "There cannot be two queens," said the king to himself, "so to-night I will watch in the nursery." As soon as the figure came in and took up her baby, he saw it was his real wife, and caught her in his arms, saying, "You are my own beloved wife, as beautiful as ever."

The wicked witch had thrown her into a trance, hoping she would die, and that the king would then marry her daughter; but on the king speaking to her, the spell was broken. The queen told the king how cruelly she had been treated by her stepmother, and on hearing this he became very angry, and had the witch and her daughter brought to justice. They were both sentenced to die—the daughter to be devoured by wild beasts, and the mother to be burnt alive.

No sooner, however, was she reduced to ashes than the charm which held the queen's brother in the form of a stag was broken; he recovered his own natural shape, and appeared before them a tall, handsome young man.

After this, the brother and sister lived happily and peacefully for the rest of their lives.

## Chapter 4

### HANSEL AND GRETHEL

*Near the borders of a large forest* dwelt in olden times a poor wood-cutter, who had two children—a boy named Hansel, and his sister, Grethel. They had very little to live upon, and once when there was a dreadful season of scarcity in the land, the poor wood-cutter could not earn sufficient to supply their daily food.

One evening, after the children were gone to bed, the parents sat talking together over their sorrow, and the poor husband sighed, and said to his wife, who was not the mother of his children, but their stepmother, “What will become of us, for I cannot earn enough to support myself and you, much less the children? what shall we do with them, for they must not starve?”

“I know what to do, husband,” she replied; “early to-morrow morning we will take the children for a walk across the forest and leave them in the thickest part; they will never find the way home again, you may depend, and then we shall only have to work for ourselves.”

“No, wife,” said the man, “that I will never do. How could I have the heart to leave my children all alone in the wood, where the wild beasts would come quickly and devour them?”

“Oh, you fool,” replied the stepmother, “if you refuse to do this, you know we must all four perish with hunger; you may as well go and cut the wood for our coffins.” And after this she let him have no peace till he became quite worn out, and could not sleep for hours, but lay thinking in sorrow about his children.

The two children, who also were too hungry to sleep, heard all that their stepmother had said to their father. Poor little Grethel wept bitter tears as she listened, and said to her brother, “What is going to happen to us, Hansel?”

“Hush, Grethel,” he whispered, “don’t be so unhappy; I know what to do.”

Then they lay quite still till their parents were asleep.

As soon as it was quiet, Hansel got up, put on his little coat, unfastened the door, and slipped out. The moon shone brightly, and the white pebble stones which lay before the cottage door glistened like new silver money. Hansel stooped and picked up as many of the pebbles as he could stuff in his little coat pockets. He then went back to Grethel and said, “Be comforted, dear little sister, and sleep in peace; heaven will take care of us.” Then he laid himself down again in bed, and slept till the day broke.

As soon as the sun was risen, the stepmother came and woke the two children, and said, “Get up, you lazy bones, and come into the wood with me to gather wood for the fire.” Then she gave each of them a piece of bread, and said, “You must keep that to eat

for your dinner, and don’t quarrel over it, for you will get nothing more.”

Grethel took the bread under her charge, for Hansel’s pockets were full of pebbles. Then the stepmother led them a long way into the forest. They had gone but a very short distance when Hansel looked back at the house, and this he did again and again.

At last his stepmother said, “Why do you keep staying behind and looking back so?”

“Oh, mother,” said the boy, “I can see my little white cat sitting on the roof of the house, and I am sure she is crying for me.”

“Nonsense,” she replied; “that is not your cat; it is the morning sun shining on the chimney-pot.”

Hansel had seen no cat, but he stayed behind every time to drop a white pebble from his pocket on the ground as they walked.

As soon as they reached a thick part of the wood, their stepmother said:

“Come, children, gather some wood, and I will make a fire, for it is very cold here.”

Then Hansel and Grethel raised quite a high heap of brushwood and faggots, which soon blazed up into a bright fire, and the woman said to them:

“Sit down here, children, and rest, while I go and find your father, who is cutting wood in the forest; when we have finished our work, we will come again and fetch you.”

Hansel and Grethel seated themselves by the fire, and when noon arrived they each ate the piece of bread which their stepmother had given them for their dinner; and as long as they heard

the strokes of the axe they felt safe, for they believed that their father was working near them. But it was not an axe they heard—only a branch which still hung on a withered tree, and was moved up and down by the wind. At last, when they had been sitting there a long time, the children's eyes became heavy with fatigue, and they fell fast asleep. When they awoke it was dark night, and poor Grethel began to cry, and said, "Oh, how shall we get out of the wood?"

But Hansel comforted her. "Don't fear," he said; "let us wait a little while till the moon rises, and then we shall easily find our way home."

Very soon the full moon rose, and then Hansel took his little sister by the hand, and the white pebble stones, which glittered like newly-coined money in the moonlight, and which Hansel had dropped as he walked, pointed out the way. They walked all the night through, and did not reach their father's house till break of day.

They knocked at the door, and when their stepmother opened it, she exclaimed: "You naughty children, why have you been staying so long in the forest? we thought you were never coming back," But their father was overjoyed to see them, for it grieved him to the heart to think that they had been left alone in the wood.

Not long after this there came another time of scarcity and want in every house, and the children heard their stepmother talking after they were in bed. "The times are as bad as ever," she said; "we have just half a loaf left, and when that is gone all love will be at an end. The children must go away; we will take them deeper

into the forest this time, and they will not be able to find their way home as they did before; it is the only plan to save ourselves from starvation." But the husband felt heavy at heart, for he thought it was better to share the last morsel with his children.

His wife would listen to nothing he said, but continued to reproach him, and as he had given way to her the first time, he could not refuse to do so now. The children were awake, and heard all the conversation; so, as soon as their parents slept, Hansel got up, intending to go out and gather some more of the bright pebbles to let fall as he walked, that they might point out the way home; but his stepmother had locked the door, and he could not open it. When he went back to his bed he told his little sister not to fret, but to go to sleep in peace, for he was sure they would be taken care of.

Early the next morning the stepmother came and pulled the children out of bed, and, when they were dressed, gave them each a piece of bread for their dinners, smaller than they had had before, and then they started on their way to the wood.

As they walked, Hansel, who had the bread in his pocket, broke off little crumbs, and stopped every now and then to drop one, turning round as if he was looking back at his home.

"Hansel," said the woman, "what are you stopping for in that way? Come along directly."

"I saw my pigeon sitting on the roof, and he wants to say good-bye to me," replied the boy.

"Nonsense," she said; "that is not your pigeon; it is only the morning sun shining on the chimney-top."

But Hansel did not look back any more; he only dropped pieces